

## ‘Lethargic’ Alligator Rescued From Prospect Park Lake

The four-foot-long alligator, now being evaluated at the Bronx Zoo, is presumed to have been abandoned by someone who kept it as a pet.



*The alligator found in Prospect Park Lake is now being cared for at the Bronx Zoo. Credit...Animal Care Centers of NYC*

It was a relatively warm February morning near Prospect Park Lake in Brooklyn, as children played and dog owners strolled by, enjoying a peaceful Sunday on a holiday weekend.

Sometime after 10 a.m., the tranquillity was interrupted by an unexpected sight: a four-foot-long alligator, which was noticed by a New York City Parks Department maintenance worker and pulled from the lake by members of the Parks Enforcement Patrol and the Urban Park Rangers, according to a Parks Department spokesman.

The animal was “in poor condition and very lethargic,” the spokesman said in a statement.

The American alligator was brought to Animal Care Centers of New York City, in Brooklyn, said Katy Hansen, the organization’s communications director, and it was transported to the Bronx Zoo on Sunday. Max Pulsinelli, a spokesman for the zoo, said the alligator was still being evaluated and declined to comment further.

This is the sixth alligator that Animal Care Centers has helped to rescue in New York City since 2018, Ms. Hansen said. Two were found abandoned outdoors (in Brooklyn in 2018 and on Staten Island in 2019); three others, one on Staten Island in 2018 and two in Brooklyn in 2019, were turned over by the police, one by the Police Department’s gang unit, she said. [Continue reading the main story](#)

[Jim Wellehan](#), an associate professor of zoological medicine at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine in Gainesville, examined a photograph of the animal rescued from the park and said it appeared to be “significantly underconditioned” and “emaciated.”

### The Rights of Animals

- **Lab Animals:** Standard ethical guidelines encourage minimizing the use of, and harm to, animals used in research. Some experts [propose an additional courtesy](#): repayment.
- **Invertebrates:** As intelligent cephalopods like octopuses and squids become more important in science, some people are seeking to give them [the same protections as lab mice and monkeys](#).
- **Volunteers Only:** A farm sanctuary in New York is investigating the inner lives of cows, pigs and chickens, but only if the animals [choose to participate in the studies](#).
- **A Case for Equal Rights:** In her latest book, the philosopher Martha C. Nussbaum argues for increased legal standing for animals. [David Marchese asked her about it](#).

Most American alligators thrive in bodies of fresh water that range in temperature from about 20 to 30 degrees Celsius, he said, or 68 to 86 degrees Fahrenheit. The temperature of the air on Sunday morning was in the low-to-mid 40s Fahrenheit. It's unclear how cold the water was in the lake, which is seven feet deep and 55 acres in size. A spokesman for the Parks Department said that the lake temperature is not tracked.

Image





*The alligator was seen in the lake by Parks department maintenance workers and removed. Credit...New York City Department of Parks&Recreation*

American alligators can thrive as far north as South Carolina, Professor Wellehan said.